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ABSTRACT

This publication attempts to explain, through historical description, the organizational structure of labor unions in the U.S. and the influence of major unions over the initiation of decision making policies governing their membership. Begun in 1792, with the unification of a group of Philadelphia shoemakers, labor unions spread from local to national by 1860. Competition of products side by side in the same market or town as well as that experienced from immigrants entering the country in increasing numbers, soon led to the development of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), an organization which brought together national trade unions. The enactment of federal legislation in 1930 which protected the worker caused a tremendous increase in union membership. In 1938 the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), which was later changed to the Congress of Industrial Organizations was established as a result of confusion and differences of opinion within the AFL. A merger between the two groups produced the currently existing AFL-CIO from which state and city-wide organizations have emerged, each having a certain interdependence, yet maintaining a great degree of autonomy. (SN)

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American

LABOR UNIONS

an outline of growth and structure

by **REED C. RICHARDSON**

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American Labor Unions

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by REED C. RICHARDSON

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About the Author

THE author was born on December 3, 1917 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He received his undergraduate training at the University of Utah and the Utah State Agricultural College. After serving with the United States Army for nearly five years during World War II, he continued his education at the University of California in Berkeley, where he received the M.A. degree. He joined the staff of the Economics Department of the University of Utah in 1947. On leave of absence from Utah, he completed the requirements for the Ph.D. degree in 1955 at Cornell University in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations. His major field was Labor Union History and Administration. A recent addition to his publications is *The Locomotive Engineer, 1863–1963—A Century of Railway Labor Relations and Work Rules.*

Dr. Richardson is now Professor of Economics and Management and heads the Institute of Industrial Relations at the University of Utah.

SIZE *and* SIGNIFICANCE *of* ORGANIZED LABOR TODAY

FROM a role of obscurity, the labor union movement advanced so rapidly after 1935 that today no single interest group is more important, economically, politically, or socially. Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger of Harvard University considered the growth of organized labor one of the ten outstanding developments of the first half of the twentieth century, sharing this distinction with such tremendous events as the two World Wars, the Great Depression of the 1930's, and the harnessing of atomic energy.

In 1933, there were 2,857,000 workers who belonged to unions. With the protection given to workers by the legislation of the 1930's,[1] membership climbed rapidly to a peak of about 18 million workers in unions in 1956. From 1956, because of a decline in employment, particularly in manufacturing, membership declined to 17.6 million in 1962. Sustained economic activity and organization efforts among government workers resulted in a rapid increase in membership from 1964 to 1966, bringing total membership to a high of 19.1 million in 1966. Numbers alone, however, do not indicate the great influence that organized labor has in our lives today. Reference to the strikes[2] of the past twenty years is ample proof that organized labor unions, especially those located in such strategic industries as transportation, steel, coal, maritime, and automobile, exercise a much greater economic and social power over our lives than mere membership figures would indicate. For example, when the Steelworkers go out on strike, it affects not only the workers on strike and their families but it affects the users of steel, such as the automobile industry, the appliance industry, manufacturers of farm equipment, and numerous other industries. The manufacturers lose business, the workers lose wages, retail stores lose sales.

Organized labor's role as an important cog in our industrial machine, its constant pressure for better working conditions, and its more recent role in the fields of health and welfare and community service have brought benefits to workers and to the nation as a whole far beyond

[1] Guarantee of right to organize without interference from the employer. Employer required to bargain collectively in good faith with authorized representatives of employees.

[2] This does not mean that strikes are always caused by labor groups. Management, by its actions, may cause labor to strike.

the limits of the union group itself.

Although much publicized, the political power of unions is still an unknown quantity. For instance, do workers vote for a certain political party because they are workers and members of a union, or do workers vote for a certain political party for any of a number of other reasons, such as family tradition, influence of the area in which they live, their religious beliefs, or the economic climate of the time? Until we can definitely determine that workers vote for a particular party because they are members of a union, it remains very difficult to say that there is any such thing as a definite labor vote.

We shall be concerned here with only one aspect of the labor movement—how it is organized. We trust that this study, along with others, will help to increase the reader's ability to understand what he reads and hears each day about organized labor. Above all, it is hoped the reader will realize that in regard to the everyday, real affairs of unions, it is very difficult to make general statements which are true of all unions or even of large portions of organized labor. Unions are extremely varied and complex in their structure and operation. It simply is not possible to say that because one union develops or behaves in a certain way this is typical of all unions.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION *of* LABOR STRUCTURE

DURING the period between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, the markets in which goods were sold were mainly local. A primary reason for such a state of affairs was the lack of adequate and cheap transportation facilities to enable goods to be shipped and sold profitably from one area to another. It is true that canals were being built in several areas in the 1820's and that the railroad was introduced in the 1830's, but it took time for the effect of these improvements in transportation to be felt. Not until the Civil War did markets become nationwide in the full meaning of the term.

As long as the markets for the goods produced by labor were chiefly local, organizations of local nature were sufficient to protect the rights of the workers.

As a result, beginning with the shoemakers of Philadelphia, organized in 1792, the labor organizations which developed between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars were almost exclusively local in scope.[1]

Thus, the broad base and, to be sure, the backbone of labor organi-

[1] A short-lived attempt was made in 1834 to form a general organization of all labor in the United States. A few national trade unions were organized in the 1850's.

zation—the local union—was conceived and born early in our history. This base has broadened until by the end of 1966 there were 76,496 local unions.

National

As long as the markets were local, the problems of labor were also primarily local. But with the rapid expansion of transportation, especially railroads, during and after the Civil War, markets for many goods speedily became nationwide. Goods, instead of being produced and sold locally only, were now being shipped all over the nation. This raised a number of problems for labor with which local unions were unable to cope, such as the organization of employers on a national scale to combat organized labor and the competition of products from different localities side by side in the same market or town.

The stove molders, for example, found that stoves produced in two areas, such as St. Louis and Troy, often were in competition with each other. If the price of stoves of the St. Louis manufacturer was lower because his wage rates were lower, it put pressure on the Troy manufacturer to lower his wages in order to place a price on his stove which was as low as the stoves from St. Louis. To stop such pressures on wages, the molders formed a national union with the avowed purpose of bringing all wages of molders to the same level so as to prevent one manufacturer from obtaining a competitive advantage over another because of wage differences.

In other cases where the market was still local, such as in the printing trades, the need for a national union was brought about by the competition of migratory workers coming into town and offering their services for less than the established town workers. A national union of printers was formed, which then attempted to control the actions of these migratory workers by issuing cards which entitled them to the benefits of the unions in the various towns. In return the migratory workers were required to pledge themselves not to attempt to undermine wages of the established town workers by offering their services for less.[2]

Thus, with the development of national trade unions[3] (unions in the same trade affiliated together into national bodies—molders, printers, carpenters, bricklayers, cigar makers), the second step in the development of modern-day labor structure was introduced.

Federation

Continued pressure was also felt after the Civil War to bring labor into an even broader organization than that of the national trade union. Examples of problems which

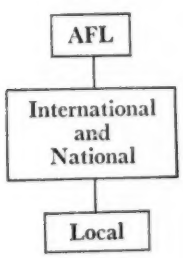
[2] It should be noted that, in specific cases, national unions have been formed for other reasons. To mention each one would only tend to complicate rather than to clarify.

[3] As these national organizatiins spread into Canada and Mexico they became known as internationals and very often added this term to their title.

it was felt required broader organization than the national union to solve were: the competition of immigrants coming into the country in unrestricted numbers, the hostile attitude of the courts, and, in many cases, the unsympathetic attitude of the federal government toward organized labor. Increasingly, organized labor found itself occupied with attempts either to prevent adverse legislation from being passed by Congress or to bring pressure on Congress to pass legislation to protect the workers from increases in hours and poorer working conditions.

Several attempts were made to establish a nationwide organization in the 1860's and 1870's but of these only one achieved success to any great degree. This was the Knights of Labor which was built on the "one big union" idea of allowing all types of workers' organizations to affiliate, regardless of trade or craft.[4]

CHART I



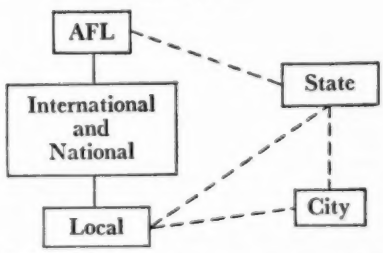
The significant development for modern-day structure, however, was the formation in 1886 of the American Federation of Labor, an organization bringing together (for cooperation) the national trade unions. With the formation of the AFL, the typical pyramid-like structure, with the locals at the base, the nationals and internationals in the middle, and the federation at the top (illustrated in Chart I), was completed. This structure is still basic for the greater part of organized labor today.

State and Local Organizations

Not all matters of common concern to workers in the various trades are national in scope. For instance, legislation of the State of New York is not a matter of direct interest to the workers of California, but is of common interest to the workers of New York. To deal with such matters as legislation (such things as unemployment insurance, disability compensation, taxes which affect the workers of the state) and education, statewide organizations of workers have been formed.[5]

Other matters are primarily of common interest on a local basis, such as dealing with local employers, civic activities, city laws and ordinances, and city elections, to list

CHART II



[4] The Knights reached a peak in 1886; after that, they suffered a rapid drop in membership.

[5] These are not collective bargaining groups.

a few. To meet the need for united action on a local basis, city-wide organizations have been established.[6]

These two types of organizations, state-wide and city-wide, complement each other and also assist in bringing about more effective action on a national scale under the direction of the federations to which they are closely associated (see Chart II).

Development of the CIO

As was indicated earlier, the legislation of the 1930's, through guaranteeing the right of workers to organize without interference from the employers, greatly encouraged a rapid growth in the membership of organized labor. This was particularly true of workers in the mass-production industries, such as steel, automobile, and rubber, where attempts at organization had not been successful before. Since these workers were semiskilled and unskilled workers, it was difficult to divide them into unions made up of skilled craftsmen (carpenters, machinists, bricklayers, etc.) which could be absorbed by the existing AFL craft unions.

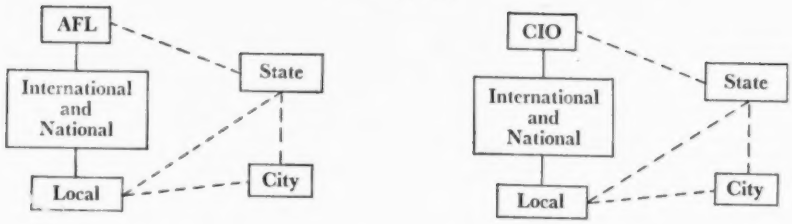
In 1935, at the annual convention, a group of leaders within the AFL, led by John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers, attempted to secure approval of a resolution favoring industrial organization for the mass-production industries. This meant that, instead of being split up on a craft basis and divided among the already existing craft unions of the AFL, workers in the mass-production industries, whether skilled or unskilled — for example, the automobile industry—would be covered by one union.

This created friction with the older craft unions, which for a long time had been opposed to any move which threatened the control they had over certain types of workers. The craft union supporters, since they were a majority in the AFL, defeated all efforts by Lewis and his followers to secure approval of industrial unionism. Shortly afterward, Lewis and the other advocates of industrial unionism established a Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) to further their cause within the AFL. This Committee included, among others, such groups as the United Mine Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the International Ladies' Garment Workers. It was augmented later by several more unions, including the United Automobile Workers of America and the United Rubber Workers of America. Because the unions affiliated with this Committee refused to disband when requested by the Executive Council of the AFL, they were suspended in 1936.

Lewis and his associates thereupon set themselves up, in 1938, as a rival federation to the AFL (see Chart III). The letters CIO were retained, but the name was changed to Congress of Industrial Organizations.

[6] City-wide organizations have a long history, dating back almost to the beginnings of the organized labor movement in the United States.

CHART III



The unity of the labor movement in the United States was shattered in 1938 by the break between the advocates of industrial unionism (CIO) and those favoring craft unionism (AFL). Nevertheless, the hope for a settlement of differences between these two groups was kept alive over the years through a series of conferences aimed at bringing unity once more to organized labor. The first of these unity conferences took place in 1937, a year before the formal break, at the special request of President Roosevelt. Other unity meetings of representatives of the two federations were held in 1939, 1942, 1947, and 1950. Failure of these conferences to reunite the AFL and the CIO was due to a number of reasons, among the more important were the following:

1. *Personalities.* With two sets of officers, one for the CIO and one for the AFL, the question as to who would hold the various offices in the merged organization was of crucial importance. For example, would Phillip Murray, then President of the CIO, or William Green, then President of the AFL, be president of the merged organization? Such a problem was intensified by the fact that both organizations were fairly equal in membership for a number of years.

2. *Jurisdictional Problems.* In a unified organization, what would be done about CIO and AFL unions with overlapping jurisdictions, i.e., CIO and AFL unions both claiming the right to organize the same workers?

3. *Communist-dominated Unions.* The more conservative AFL was reluctant to consider actual unification so long as such Communist-dominated unions as the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, and the International Fur and Leather Workers' Union were allowed to retain their affiliation with the CIO.

4. *Industrial Unionism versus Craft Unionism.* The conflict was not only a conflict of principle over the basis of organization but also conflict between two opposing groups for power in the labor movement. The old-line craft unions were certainly not in a mood to agree to any merger proposal which would

allow the rising industrial unions to gain control of a merged organization. If the industrial unions (CIO) could be prevented from acquiring members from among workers who could possibly be included in a craft union, it would be a means of maintaining the numerical superiority of the craft unions in the labor movement.

These sources of conflict, varying in importance at five different unity conferences, prevented a real agreement from being made. However, as a result of developments within the labor movement, the differences between the AFL and the CIO gradually narrowed over the years so that, by 1954, there was a greater possibility that successful unity negotiations could be conducted.

Among the more important of these developments between 1938 and 1954 were the following: (1) In 1952, both national leaders, William Green of the AFL and Phillip Murray of the CIO, died. They were replaced by two younger men, George Meany (AFL) and Walter Reuther (CIO), who were more willing to subordinate individual interests and aspirations to the bringing about of an effective unity of labor. (2) The CIO, in 1949–1950, expelled eleven Communist-dominated unions from its ranks, thus removing an obstacle to successful negotiations with the AFL. (3) Both groups, while holding to their respective philosophies—industrial unionism (CIO) and craft unionism (AFL)—had, in practice, broadened their basis of organization over the years until the majority of their affiliated unions was neither strictly industrial nor craft. This change placed their organizational structures on more common ground. (4) In 1953, both federations, realizing the difficulties raised by conflicting jurisdictional claims, took the first step toward removing jurisdictional problems from open strife with the adoption by the respective executive boards of the two federations of a "no-raiding" pact. This was one of the most significant developments leading to the final merger negotiations. A no-raiding pact between the two organizations meant that the AFL unions would not attempt to enroll members belonging to CIO unions, and CIO unions would not attempt to enroll AFL members. In order to be fully effective, the no-raiding pact had to be ratified by each affiliated international union of the AFL and the CIO. Such a ratification was soon made by the overwhelming majority of both groups, signifying their general willingness to settle jurisdictional problems by peaceful means. A few unions, including the powerful Teamsters' union, refused to ratify the no-raiding pact. (5) Finally, the significance of the Taft-Hartley Act as a unifying force cannot be overlooked. The efforts of both groups combined in a unified political opposition to the Taft-Hartley Act certainly made it easier for them to discuss organic unity.

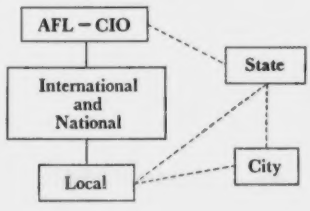
Thus, as a result of the removal of many points of conflict which

had prevented effective unity talks in earlier conferences, the leaders of the AFL and CIO were able, by 1955, to work out a unity agreement. Under this agreement, the two federations were to be merged into one united federation, known as the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations.[7] At the time, Meany and Reuther issued a joint statement which follows, in part:

> The agreement reached today by the AFL and CIO Unity Committee sets the course for the attainment of a merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations into a united trade union movement.
>
> This agreement—if accepted by the executive bodies of our two organizations, as we hope and expect—will mark the end of the division in the free trade union movement of our country that has existed for almost 20 years.
>
> It is our belief that a united labor movement will be able to devote the talent and strength of our trade unions to greater service to the people of the United States.

Both federations changed their convention dates to December 1 and 2, 1955, so as to deal simultaneously with the problem of ratification and to be congregated in the same locality for the following convention of the AFL-CIO. Ratification of the merger agreement by the AFL convention was without incident. Ratification by the CIO convention was almost unanimous. Michael Quill, President of the CIO Transport Workers, and two delegates representing local industrial union councils voted against the merger. The separate ratifying conventions of the two federations were followed, on December 5, by the founding convention of the AFL-CIO, where the new constitution and related agreements were approved and officers were elected. The merged organization did not alter the basic structure of organized labor (see Chart IV). Unification of offices at the federation level was taken care of with dispatch. However, unification of state AFL and CIO federations, though intended to be completed in two years, was extended over a much longer period of time.

CHART IV



The merger agreement in no way changed the structure of the affiliated national unions nor does it require them to merge. Nevertheless, discussions have taken place between a number of unions with

[7] References to the merged organization in the remainder of this bulletin will be under the designation AFL-CIO.

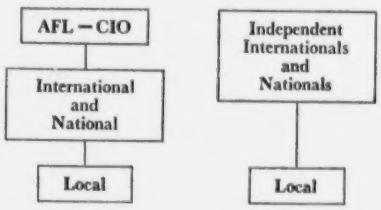
overlapping jurisdictions looking toward or resulting in merger. To cite just two examples: the Barbers and Beauty Culturists of America (formerly CIO) reaffiliated with the Journeyman Barbers, Hairdressers, Cosmetologists, and Proprietors' International Union of America (formerly AFL); and the International Glove Workers Union of America (AFL-CIO) became a part of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (AFL-CIO).

Independent Unionism

A minority, but a rather important minority, of unions have chosen not to affiliate themselves either with the AFL or the CIO or with the now merged organization, AFL-CIO.[8] This group represents 61 of the approximately 190 international unions and about 3 million of the total membership of organized labor in the United States.[9] Included are some unions, such as the Engineers and Conductors of the Railroad Operating Brotherhoods, which have never been affiliated with a national federation (AFL, CIO, or AFL-CIO), and the Teamsters' union (1,600,000 members) expelled from the AFL-CIO in 1957 for financial malpractices and undemocratic procedures.[10] About 25 percent of other independent unions have been affiliated with a national federation at some time or other in their history. The classic example is the United Mine Workers which has been in and out of both federations (AFL and CIO). These unions, then, add another group to the chart of organization (see Chart V).[11]

This brief resumé of the growth of trade union organization in the United States leaves a number of questions unanswered. It does not,

CHART V



[8] Although these groups have been left until the end of the historical summary, they are not of recent origin. Some of them, particularly the Railroad Brotherhoods, were established even before the AFL.

[9] Includes the considerable increase brought about by the expulsion of eleven Communist-dominated unions from the CIO in 1950.

[10] The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (196,000 members) and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen (75,000 members) abandoned their traditional independence and affiliated with the AFL-CIO in 1957 and 1958, respectively. Other major developments since these figures were published in 1967 were the disaffiliation of the UAW (Auto Workers) from the AFL-CIO in July of 1968, taking with them a membership of over 1,400,000 and the expulsion of the Chemical Workers (93,000) in 1969. The latter was expelled for affiliating with the Alliance for Labor Action, a separate organization established by the Teamsters and Auto Workers which the AFL-CIO considers a dual organization.

[11] Labor organizations in the United States are also affiliated with regional or world groups outside of the United States, including the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Trade Secretariats (ITS).

for instance, indicate the numerous shapes and forms that labor organizations take in practice. It does not indicate where the actual control is between the federation and the nationals, on the one hand, and the nationals and the locals, on the other. The following discussion of federation, nationals, and locals is presented to explain and illustrate, not only the formal pattern of structure, but also the practical relationships of these three general groups.

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION *of* LABOR *and* CONGRESS *of* INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS (AFL-CIO)

THE formation of the AFL-CIO represented the merging of interests of the two major federations of the labor movement, the AFL and the CIO, which had existed separately on a formal basis since 1938. Therefore, an understanding of the structure and philosophy of the AFL and the CIO as they existed separately prior to their merger is necessary to obtain a clear view of the nature of the combined federation.

As the AFL existed in 1955 prior to the merger, it was a loose federation composed of 108 national and international trade unions with a membership of approximately 11 million. To the internationals, in turn, were affiliated some 50,000 local trade unions. Included among the international unions were such well-known groups as the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, with over 800,000 members; the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America, with a membership in excess of 1,200,000; and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, with 440,000 members.[1] There were also such little-known unions as the International Association of Siderographers (engravers of softened steel or iron), with a membership of 44, and the International Union of Journeymen Horseshoers of the United States and Canada, with a membership of 246.

In addition, there were 50 state federations of labor (including Alaska and Puerto Rico), 829 city

[1] For purposes of comparability, the membership figures in this bulletin have all been taken from the *Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the United States* (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1955 and 1967) which bases the membership figures on the reports which the various unions make to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and includes membership in the United States and Canada. Since most unions use per capita dues payments to their internationals to compute their membership reports, these figures may be above or below the actual dues-paying membership. Later figures can always be obtained from individual unions. Additional information on union membership may be found in *Information Please* and *World Almanac*.

central federations to deal with problems of state or local interests, and over 900 federal labor unions. For example, in New York there were a state federation of labor, with headquarters in Albany, and 38 city central groups, composed of the AFL locals of the various AFL internationals, located in such cities as Albany, Buffalo, Cortland, Elmira, Ithaca, New York City, and Watertown.

One of the major problems facing the AFL very early in its history was the problem of jurisdiction. To illustrate, the Machinists and Carpenters were engaged in several squabbles over who should install machines where wood was involved. To deal with such problems among unions with mutual trade interests, four departments operating with their own full staffs were established within the AFL. These departments were called the Building and Construction Trades Department, the Metal Trades Department, the Railway Employees' Department, and the Maritime Trades Department. Trade unions in the construction, metal, railway, and maritime trades were affiliated with these departments in addition to being affiliated with the AFL through their own internationals. For example, the Building and Construction Trades Department included such unions as the Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers, the Electrical Workers, the Carpenters, and the Painters. In several instances, one trade union was affiliated with more than one department, such as the Boilermakers who belonged to both the Construction and the Metal Trades Departments, and the Electrical Workers who belonged, in addition, to the Railway Employees' Department.

A fifth department was concerned with the maintenance of union standards through the use of the union label. For example, many items of clothing bear a label identifying them as having been made by union labor and under union conditions. This practice is to encourage the use of union-made goods.

The CIO, with 5.2 million members in 1955, was similar in general structure to the AFL, except that the unions composing the CIO tended toward the industrial principle of organization, whereas the AFL tended to favor the craft principle of organization. There were 30 international unions affiliated with the CIO; 44 state industrial union councils, including the District of Columbia; 296 city and county councils, and approximately 100 local industrial unions affiliated directly with the CIO. Some of the better-known CIO international unions were: the Automobile Workers, with a membership of approximately 1,200,000; the Steelworkers, with 1,100,000 members; and the Clothing Workers, with 385,000 members.

The CIO, like the AFL, had its jurisdictional troubles (conflicts between CIO unions as to which ones would represent certain workers).

As a result, Dr. George W. Taylor, former Chairman of the Wage Stabilization Board, was appointed in 1952 as arbitrator to settle jurisdictional problems between CIO unions. He was succeeded by Nathan P. Feinsinger in 1953. Whenever a jurisdictional dispute arose within the CIO which was not settled, it went to the arbitrator, who rendered a decision binding both parties.

Both federations pursued the general objectives of encouraging the formation and extension of organized labor into the unorganized field, securing laws favorable to labor, and promoting a friendly public feeling toward organized labor.

AFL-CIO

The unified federation formed by a combination of the former American Federation of Labor and the former Congress of Industrial Organizations retained the same basic structure of the merging federations, namely, locals affiliated with their internationals and the internationals, in turn, affiliated with the AFL-CIO combined federation.[2] The main structural concession in the merger agreement was the establishment of a sixth department (discussed below), known as the Industrial Union Department, to recognize the interests of unions organized in whole or in part on an industrial union basis. Through the establishment of this department, the merged organization acknowledged the value of organization on an industrial as well as on a craft basis.

The AFL-CIO, according to the 1967 Directory, brings into a unified federation 129 international unions formerly affiliated with either the AFL or with the CIO or independent. The affiliation of these 129 international unions brings into the fold of a single federation about 65,000 local unions and a total membership of about 16,000,000 workers. State federations affiliated with the new organization number 50 with other bodies covering the territories of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. City and county federations in the AFL-CIO number 800 to 900.[3] Although the merging of administrative offices on the national and regional levels was completed soon after the merger, the process of merging city and state organizations continued for some time after 1955. The merger agreement allowed state and city organizations until December of 1957 to complete the consolidation. However, the merger of all state bodies chartered by the former AFL and the former CIO was not accomplished until 1961

[2] An interesting feature of the Implementation Agreement, which sets forth the legal aspects of the merger, is found in Section 1. This section states that the newly formed federation is to be "deemed, for all purposes, to be a combination and continuation" of the AFL and the CIO. Neither the AFL nor the CIO "shall be deemed, for any purpose, to be dissolved, terminated, or discontinued. . . ."

[3] For administrative efficiency, the AFL-CIO is also divided into 23 regional offices.

when the New Jersey organizations merged. The latest report of the federation indicated that unity had also been achieved for all city and county central bodies. Some difficulty was experienced in gaining the cooperation of unions in the construction trades to merge at state and local levels, because they feared that their power and position would be undermined by affiliation with a central body in which there were industrial unions covering plants where members of the construction trade unions worked.

Policy and Administration

The policies of the federation are decided upon in the national convention of the AFL-CIO. These conventions are run on much the same style as the conventions of the Democratic and Republican parties with behind-the-scene maneuvering and compromise on policy by the more important groups before proposals are introduced on the floor of the convention. The vote on the floor of the convention thus becomes more of a formal assent to that which has already been agreed upon by the more powerful unions within the federation. Delegates from the various affiliated bodies including international, state, and city organizations, and local federal unions meet in convention every two years during the last four months of the year at a time and place designated by the Executive Council. Delegates to the convention are on an apportioned basis, varying from one delegate for unions of less than 4,000 members to 9 delegates for unions with a membership of 175,000. Unions with a larger membership are entitled to 9 delegates plus one additional delegate for each 75,000 members over 175,000. Thus, unions such as the Air Line Dispatchers Association and the Radio and Television Directors Guild will each have one delegate. A union such as the Garment Workers will have 12 and the Machinists 20.

Of even greater significance in explaining power relationships within the AFL-CIO, however, is the apportionment of the voting. State and city federations each have one vote. Votes for the affiliated international unions are on a basis of one vote for each dues-paying member. On such a basis, it can be clearly appreciated that the larger unions in the federation carry a decisive vote in the policies adopted, just as the larger states, such as New York, Pennsylvania, and California, do at the national conventions of the political parties.

Between conventions, the federation is run by executive boards. The AFL-CIO constitution provides for two general or executive groups: the Executive Council and the General Board. The Executive Council numbers 35 and consists of the Vice-Presideats elected from the more important international unions plus the AFL-CIO President and Secretary-Treasurer. It meets at least three times a year and under the constitution is charged with the responsibility of governing the fed-

eration between conventions. There was, until 1967, an Executive Committee consisting of the President and the Secretary-Treasurer and six Vice-Presidents selected by the Executive Council. This committee met every two months and acted as an advisory and consulting committee for the general officers of the federation on policy matters. This committee was disbanded by convention action in 1967.

To effect broader representation in the administration of federation affairs, the General Board, patterned after the old CIO administrative setup, includes all 35 members of the AFL-CIO Executive Council plus one representative, usually the President or a principal officer, from each of the affiliated international unions and each of the departments. The General Board thus has 166 members and meets once a year to decide all policy questions referred to it by the executive officers or the Executive Council. It serves, in effect, as a broader sounding board on matters of crucial concern to the federation.

In addition to these general officers, the federation has a large administrative staff operating in much the same manner as any large corporation. A large staff is necessitated by the many activities of the federation which include international affairs, organization, research, legislation, publicity, publications,[4] workers' education, community services, political action, civil rights, and ethical practices.

Departments

As mentioned earlier, the AFL prior to the merger already had established five departments to aid in settling problems connected with jurisdiction, collective bargaining, and the union label. The merger brought into existence a new department, the Industrial Union Department. Affiliation with the Industrial Union Department is open to all international unions in the AFL-CIO which are organized in whole or in part on an industrial union basis. The stated objective of this department is:

> To promote the interests of industrial unions within the AFL-CIO consistent with the principle established in the AFL-CIO constitution that both craft and industrial unions are appropriate, equal and necessary as methods of union organization.

The Industrial Union Department is by far the largest organized group within the federation structure and, consequently, plays an important role in the administrative policies of the AFL-CIO. At the time of merger, the new department opened business with 66 affiliated unions representing over 7 million union members. Thirty-five of the 66 affiliated unions, representing about one-third of the membership, were former AFL unions. The re-

[4] For example, the AFL-CIO publishes the *AFL-CIO News* (weekly), the *American Federationist* (monthly), and the *AFL-CIO Collective Bargaining Report* (monthly).

maining two-thirds were members of former CIO affiliated unions. Included among the 66 affiliated groups were such unions as the Automobile Workers, Steelworkers, Teamsters, Machinists,[5] and Electrical Workers, to name a few of the largest. There were also such small unions as the Barbers, Broadcast Employees and Technicians, Leather Workers, Transport Service Workers, Coopers, and Technical Engineers. Latest figures indicate that because of expulsions and mergers of AFL-CIO affiliates the total number of international unions affiliated with the Industrial Union Department stood at 58 in 1966, a reduction of 8. However, the department still accounted for the largest single bloc of union members within the AFL-CIO.

A new department was organized and given constitutional status in 1961, composed of unions in the food and beverage trades, but was disbanded by convention action in 1965.

Authority and Power of the Federation

The federation is primarily a service organization established for the purpose of aiding the affiliated internationals in problems requiring broader organization. Its power over the quite independent internationals is through persuasion, rather than force, and depends to a great extent upon the willingness of the internationals to cooperate. The only disciplining power of the federation is its constitutional right to suspend and expel unions which violate established rules or policy. With the exception of a few notable cases, namely the AFL expulsion in 1938 of some unions which later constituted the CIO, the CIO expulsion of eleven Communist-dominated unions in 1949–1950, and the expulsion from the AFL-CIO of the Teamsters (1957), the Bakery Workers union (1957), and the Chemical Workers Union (1969), this power has been used sparingly. The federations in the past (AFL and the CIO) have considered its use a sign of weakness which they would rather not publicize. In addition, suspending or expelling a union has not proven, to date, a very strong corrective for wayward unions, since, in many cases, they continue to function and, in some cases, to prosper as independent unions, viz. the Teamsters' union, which has continued to expand as an independent union.

Also, both federations—more particularly the AFL—were, prior to the merger, very hesitant to intrude in the internal affairs of the internationals. The reason for this was that the internationals have traditionally been touchy about any interference with their freedom of action and on the slightest pretext have suddenly withdrawn from the federation with which they were

[5] Only 400,000 of the Teamsters' membership and 450,000 of the Machinists' membership qualified as members of industrial unions and were therefore eligible for affiliation with the Industrial Union Department.

affiliated. For example, the Carpenters union, one of the most powerful groups of the AFL, suddenly announced it was leaving the AFL in the summer of 1953 because it didn't like an agreement the AFL made with the CIO. (The walkout was only temporary.) Another example was the International Association of Machinists. This group has been in and out of the AFL several times. In 1946 it withdrew because the Machinists felt the AFL Executive Council was discriminating against them. It returned in 1951, still independent in thought and action. The classic of all examples of abrupt decisions was expressed with brevity on a slip of paper John L. Lewis of the Mineworkers handed to the President of the AFL during the convention of 1947, on which he had written, "Green, we disaffiliate. Lewis."

The point should be made, however, that despite the apparent weakness of the federation to compel the internationals to comply, there has been a remarkable degree of unity. This solidarity[6] has resulted primarily from the willingness of the internationals to conform voluntarily to the general policies of the federation and from the exercise of diplomacy by the federation officers in representing their affiliated organizations. The history of labor federation is a testimony of the effectiveness of persuasion as a substitute for force.

[6] It still remains to be seen how much impact the new alliance of the independent unions of the Teamsters and Auto Workers (Alliance for Labor Action) will have upon the solidarity of the AFL-CIO.

NATIONAL *and* INTERNATIONAL UNIONS

OF the 190 international unions in the United States, 61 are not affiliated with the AFL-CIO. However, this should not be taken to mean that a large part of organized labor is outside of the federation, since better than 8 out of every 10 union members belong to unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

In size, the internationals range from the Teamsters, with 1,600,000 members, the Automobile Workers (UAW) with 1,400,000, the Machinists with 836,000, and the Steelworkers with approximately 1,000,000 to the Siderographers with 29 members; and from the Carpenters with 2,643 local affiliated unions and the United Federation of Postal Clerks with 6,776 locals, to the Federal Employees Association with 1 local, or the American Radio Association with no local unions at all.

There is no simple way to classify the international unions according to the form of organization. The usual references are to international craft unions or international industrial unions when, as a matter of fact, only about 6 percent are strict-

ly craft organizations, 17 percent industrial organizations, and the bulk, or 77 percent, are part craft and part industrial.

In financial matters, there is also great variation among the various international unions. In 1948, 28 of the international unions each had assets of more than a million dollars. In addition, a considerable number have annual incomes running into a million dollars or more a year. For example, from dues alone, the annual income, in 1963, of the Steelworkers was over $31,000,000, the Machinists over $20,000,000, and the Electrical Workers (IBEW) over $14,000,000. The total income of the internationals and their locals together would, of course, be much higher. In contrast, the annual income of the national office of the AFL-CIO (about 15 million members) in 1963 would be approximately $10,500,000 annually, based on a 7-cent tax per member per month.[1] The larger income of the internationals in many cases helps to explain their independence in the organized labor picture.

The incomes of the internationals and the federation do not seem so large, however, when compared with some of the large present-day corporations. For example, in 1963, the General Motors Corporation had a net income of over $1.5 billion and the United States Steel Corporation had over $200 million.

[1] This was increased to 10¢ per member per month at the 1969 AFL-CIO convention.

Functions and Objectives

The chief functions of the internationals are: to extend union organization, to aid local unions in their bargaining, and to participate in the programs of the federation. The international unions, like the federation, are governed in all formal policy matters by the conventions which, as a rule, meet less frequently than does the federation.[2] Likewise, between conventions, the international, as well as the federation, is governed by an Executive Council, including several full-time officers.

Power

The federation (AFL-CIO) is more publicity-minded and, therefore, more frequently before the public eye than the internationals. In addition, most of the important policy announcements for organized labor are made by the federation. As a result, many people are led to believe that real power in the labor movement rests in the hands of the federation. This is not true. The real seat of power in organized labor is in the international unions, not only in their relations with the federation (AFL-CIO), but also in their relations with their own local member unions.

The authority of the international unions over their member locals is well illustrated by Professor Maurice Neufeld in *The House of Labor*. He indicates that the Execu-

[2] A measure to keep expenses under control.

tive Board of the international union, with some exceptions such as are found in unions in the building trades and in some skilled crafts, usually has

> the authority to grant and withdraw local charters, repeal non-conforming by-laws of any local, remove any officer for sufficient reasons, fill vacancies, direct the affairs of a local when it has been agreed that this would be salutary, hear claims and grievances from locals and other subordinate bodies. . . .

When to this authority is added a high degree of control over the right to strike and the collective bargaining negotiations of its member locals, it can be easily seen that there is a considerable centralization of power.

To discipline their local member unions, international unions can and do use these powers to curb. For example, on March 16, 1952, the United Auto Workers took over the operation of Ford Local 600 at Detroit—claimed to be the largest local union in the world, with around 60,000 members.[3] Local 600 was accused of causing "irreparable damage" by failing to enforce the UAW's constitutional provisions against the Communists. Another example was when Dave Beck, head of the powerful Teamsters' union, took over control of the local Teamsters' unions in Albany, Binghamton, and in Westchester County, New York, in December 1953, because of "improper activities" of their officers.

The international unions generally exercise rather strong control over their local unions. However, this control will vary considerably from one international to another and from one situation to another. For example, although it has been done, international union officers will hesitate before they will bring action against their stronger member locals. Likewise, the power of the international union will be much stronger where the goods produced by its members are sold nationwide, such as steel, automobiles, coal. On the other hand, where the product or service produced by the members is sold locally, the local union may be much more independent of its international union. For example, the building trades' unions negotiate contracts on a local area basis quite independent of their international unions.

In general, while some local unions are more independent of their international unions than others, the local unions are quite closely controlled by their internationals.

[3] The UAW constitution requires election of new officers within sixty days of suspension after which the local is returned its autonomy.

LOCAL

THE ultimate source of strength for organized labor and the broad base upon which the structure of organized labor rests are found in the 76,496 local unions. It should be kept in mind that, while the international unions in general exercise a great deal of control over the locals, at the same time in many ways, they, the internationals, are quite dependent upon the locals for their existence. It is through the locals that their membership is derived; it is through the locals that their finances are maintained, and it is in accordance with the strength of the locals that the national becomes a strong, mediocre, or weak organization. Finally, it is through the locals that the pulse and sentiment of the labor movement are felt by the internationals and the federation, and serve as a basis for policy formulations.

Local unions vary considerably in size. Some have just a few members, while others—the Ford local, for example—have many thousands of members. The majority of locals have less than two or three hundred members.

Organization within the local union tends to be patterned after the national union, with a President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Executive Board to handle the affairs of the union. One important difference, however, between the local union and the national union is that the local officers often are either unpaid or receive a very small salary. Usually, the local officers work at their regular jobs as machinists or electricians and administer their offices on the side, or on a part-time basis. Another important cog in the functioning of the union is the union steward whom the men of a shop or department elect from their group to represent them primarily on grievance matters.

Where the local union is too much of a burden to be run on a part-time basis, a professional full-time man has often been employed. He is known as the Business Agent and is either elected by the members of the local or appointed by the union officials. Since the officers of the local are not on a full-time basis, they leave more and more of the administration of the union to the Business Agent.

As a result, the Business Agent in many cases becomes the real power in the local union. For example, Professor Neufeld notes that in Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, a New York City local, the "business manager, and not the president, is the most important individual. . . ."

SUMMARY

TO repeat once more our original words of caution—the organization of labor in the United States is much more varied and complicated than it appears at first glance. As a result, we should be careful not to try to extend to all groups of organized labor what we read about one group. We should, likewise, be wary of assuming that, because the federation comes out with important policy announcements from time to time, this is gospel for all labor groups. As a matter of fact, we have indicated that there is considerable independence among groups and individuals in organized labor, especially the international unions. Finally, it is suggested that only by looking carefully into the facts can we gain a clear picture of how organized labor operates. For this purpose, additional sources of reading material are listed below.

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